

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRIDGE 01785 021657Z  
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 EUR-08 PM-03  
SP-02 L-01 PRS-01 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01  
TRSE-00 IO-06 /057 W  
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R 021535Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3280  
INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1785

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: BB, PGOV  
SUBJECT: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

1. BASED UPON ONLY FEW HOURS DIRECT CONTACT WITH PROBLEMS  
EASTERN CARIBBEAN AS PERCEIVED FROM HERE, I VENTURE  
FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS. THERE IS GOOD PROBABILITY THAT  
LOCAL PICTURE WILL NEVER SEEM CLEARER TO ME THAN NOW  
WHEN MOST QUALIFYING FACTORS ARE ONLY DIMLY APPRECIATED.

A. LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND COMMON FOLK ALIKE ARE PROUD, EXCITED  
AND SOMEWHAT CONFUSED BY UNMISTAKABLE SIGNALS FROM WASHINGTON  
THAT US WILL PLAY LARGER ROLE IN AREA.

B. THIS PERCEPTION WILL HASTEN A TURNING AWAY FROM THE BRITISH  
METROPOLE--A PROSPECT APPARENTLY ACCEPTED BY ALL CONCERNED.

C. THE ANTICIPATION OF MATERIAL IMPROVEMENTS AND OTHER BENEFITS  
BLOWING FROM INCREASED US ROLE WILL ACCELERATE ALREADY ADVANCED  
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FRACTIONIZATION OF THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN. MOST ISLAND S  
HAVE INDIVIDUALIZED "WISH LISTS" WHICH PROBABLY WILL TEND  
TO ACCENTUATE RIVALRIES AND PETTY JEALOUSIES BETWEEN ISLANDS.  
I HAVE YET TO PERCEIVE WHAT I CONSIDER ANY GENUINE CONCERN BY  
RELATIVELY WELL-OFF BARBADIANS FOR THEIR LESS FORTUNATE  
NEIGHBORS. INSTEAD I EXPECT BARBADIANS AGGRESSIVELY TO PRESS  
FOR FULL PARTICIPATION IN ANY INCREASE IN US ASSISTANCE TO THE

AREA.

D. AS MODEL DEMOCRATS AND LOYAL ALLIES INHABITANTS EASTERN CARIBBEAN VIEW OUR ACTIONS IN GUYANA AND JAMAICA WITH CONCERN. THEY EXPECT US TO BE AT LEAST AS OPEN-HEARTED AND OPENHANDED WITH TRIED AND TRUE FRIENDS AS WITH ACERBIC CRITICS. I EXPECT TO CONVINCE THEM THAT IMPROVED US POSITION IN GUYANA AND JAMAICA IS OF POSITIVE AND VERY REAL BENEFIT TO EASTERN CARIBBEAN.

E. TOO MANY STATEMENTS OF OUR SINCERE INTENTION TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THIS AREA IRONICALLY COULD CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH BILATERAL RELATIONS WOULD IN FACT BE STRAINED IF NOT WORSENER. THIS BECAUSE OF UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS THAT WOULD BE AROUSED, INCREASED INTER-ISLAND RIVALRIES AND ATTEMPTS BY GOVERNMENTS TO CREATE STRONG BARGAINING POSITIONS TO OBTAIN PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT FROM US.

F. GENERAL SITUATION HERE BRINGS TO MIND MY FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCES WITH EARLY YEARS ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS WHEN OUR INTENTIONS TENDED TO BE OVERSOLD AND OUR RHETORIC MISTAKEN FOR REALITY. RESULT WAS CREATION OF EUPHORIC ATMOSPHERE THAT INEVITABLY SOURED INTO BITTERNESS AND RESENTMENT AS ANTICIPATED BENEFITS FAILED TO MATERIALIZE QUICKLY.

G. THESE ARE GOOD, TRUSTING AND LOYAL PEOPLE. THEY KNOW WE HAVE CAPABILITY FOR SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVING SITUATION HERE.  
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ANY FAILURE ON OUR PART RAPIDLY TO DO SO AS THE RESULT OF OUR SOMETIMES CUMBERSOME CONSITUTIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPERATIVES COULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD AND BE SEEN AS MEAN-SPIRITED POWER POLITICS.

2. IN REFLECTING ON THESE INITIAL IMPRESSIONS I AM MORE CONVINCED THAN EVER THAT WE HAVE FOCUSED SERIOUS ATTENTION ON THE CARIBBEAN NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON. I AM ALSO INCLINED TO SUGGEST THAT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WE LET OUR DEEDS SPEAK FOR US. OUR RHETORIC THUS FAR HAS BEEN CIRCUMSPECT AND MEASURED BUT EVEN AN INCREASE IN THE VOLUME OF PRUDENT COMMENT COULD LEAD TO SOME OF THE PITFALLS CITED ABOVE.

3. IN THE COMING WEEKS AND IN LINE WITH COURSE SET IN FORTHCOMING NSC POLICY REVIEW WE HERE SHALL RECOMMEND STEPS WE CONSIDER FEASIBLE TO HELP ASSURE STABILITY IN THIS COMPLEX AREA. OUR RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE BASED ON ASCERTAINABLE FACTS MORE THAN ON INTUITIVE RUMINATION AS IN PRESENT CASE.

4. A FURTHER THOUGHT. I AM NOW INCLINED TO BELIEVE ACTIONS WE MIGHT CONTEMPLATE, WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE IF IMPLEMENTED IN CONSULTATION WITH OTHERS SUCH AS UK, CANADA, DUTCH, VENEZUELANS

AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ALL OF WHOM ALSO HAVE IMPORTANT  
STAKES AND ASSETS IN AREA.  
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## Message Attributes

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